

Application Serial No.: 09/786,369
Amendment dated December 9, 2003
Reply to Office Action dated September 9, 2003

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-7, and 11-18 are presently active in this case, Claims 1 and 11-13 having been amended and Claims 14-18 having been added by way of the present Amendment. Claims 2 and 8-10 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

In the outstanding Official Action, the drawings were objected to because reference character 3 is missing from Figure 1. Submitted concurrently herewith is a Replacement Sheet which includes changes to Figure 1 to address the objection. Accordingly, the Applicant requests the withdrawal of the objection to the drawings.

Claims 1, 6, and 11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Kobrehel (U.S. Patent No. 5,927,020). Claims 3-5 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kobrehel in view of Grimes (U.S. Patent No. 5,040,335). Claims 12 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Kobrehel. For the reasons discussed below, the Applicant traverses the art rejections.

The Applicant submits that the Kobrehel reference does not anticipate Claim 1 of the present application, since the Kobrehel reference does not disclose all of the limitations of Claim 1.

Claim 1 of the present application recites a door trim structure for automobiles. The door trim structure comprises a door trim and an inner door panel both made of a thermoplastic resin. The inner door panel includes a functional member attachment portion

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integral with the inner door panel. The functional member attachment portion includes a first protrusion as a part of an inner wall of the door trim structure, and the door trim includes a second protrusion that is fused to the first protrusion to form a seal. (See, e.g., page 18, line 14, through page 19, line 2, of the specification for support for the amendment.)

The Kobrehel reference describes a modular insert trim unit for a motor vehicle door. The Official Action cites the door cavity insert (12) of the Kobrehel reference for the teaching of the door trim of Claim 1, and the rigid fasteners (22) and unitary mounting bosses (30) for the teaching of the functional member attachment portion of Claim 1. However, the Applicant notes that neither the rigid fasteners (22) nor the unitary mounting bosses (30) of the Kobrehel reference have a first protrusion as a part of an inner wall of the door trim structure as recited in Claim 1. Furthermore, the door cavity insert (12) does not include a second protrusion that is fused to the first protrusion to form a seal, as recited in Claim 1.

Accordingly, the Kobrehel reference does not disclose all of the limitations recited in Claim 1 of the present application, since the Kobrehel reference does not disclose a functional member attachment portion that includes a first protrusion as a part of an inner wall of the door trim structure, and the door trim includes a second protrusion that is fused to the first protrusion to form a seal. Thus, the Applicant respectfully requests the withdrawal of the anticipation rejection of Claim 1.

Claims 3-7 and 11-13 are considered allowable for the reasons advanced for Claim 1 from which they depend. These claims are further considered allowable as they recite other features of the invention that are neither disclosed, taught, nor suggested by the applied references when those features are considered within the context of Claim 1. The Applicant

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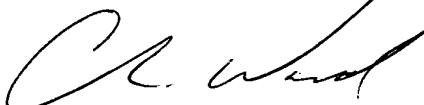
notes that the Grimes reference does not supplement the deficiencies in the teachings of the Kobrehel reference discussed above.

Newly added Claims 14-18 are considered allowable as they recite features of the invention that are neither disclosed nor suggested by the references of record. The Applicant submits that the cited references do not teach or suggest a method comprising the step of forming an inner door panel and a door trim of thermoplastic resin into an integral one-piece unit by a blow-molding process, wherein the inner door panel and the door trim are formed from a single parison with a tip end of the inner door panel being bonded and integrated with the door trim at at least one part, as recited in independent Claim 14.

Consequently, in view of the above discussion, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for formal allowance and an early and favorable reconsideration of this application is therefore requested.

Respectfully Submitted,

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